

[Q&A's from April 28 Webinar with Melinda Huntley, Ohio Travel Association](#)

We live in a time of constant change and new information. Since the webinar was held, the Governor has [clarified face covering mandates](#) – employees must wear face coverings and it is highly recommended that customers/guest do as well. Several exclusions are identified.

To keep updated with changes and new information, visit the Ohio Travel Association [Daily Updates](#) page regularly, as well the State of Ohio's coronavirus.ohio.gov site.

New state orders will be posted [here](#) as they are released.

What is the timeline for opening and for guidelines for festivals, concerts, sporting events and attractions?

We don't know about timeline for opening. It will depend on how this first round of openings impacts the key COVID-19 metrics in place by the Ohio Department of Health. Guidelines for other types of businesses are currently being developed and a taskforce has been formed to review guidelines for mass gatherings. The questions and concerns OTA is hearing through these webinars and business discussions are being shared.

Any word about if wineries will be grouped with restaurants?

This question could apply to breweries and distilleries as well. According to the Ohio Craft Brewers Association, Ohio Grape Industries and the Ohio Wine Producers, none have received word on this. Ohio Grape Industries says tasting rooms of these businesses will follow restaurant protocols, while production side of these businesses will follow manufacturing guidelines already released.

Visitors centers are general offices. Are we able to be open?

Instead of asking "Are we able to open?" you need to ask yourself "Should we open?" or "Why would we open?" Remember that your top priority should be keeping you employees, guests and suppliers safe. The governor has clearly stated that those who can work remotely should continue to do so, and he has sent emails to state employees notifying them that teleworking will continue until further notice.

Can I operate small group city walking tours if social distancing measures are taken?

Contact your local health department if there is any confusion on whether or not your business qualifies for re-opening in May. Mass gatherings of 10 or more are still going to be prohibited in the May 1 order.

What about summer camps? Can we open if we limit to 10 kids and require masks and distancing? When will we know?

Currently, residential and day camps are specifically identified in the [list of business closures](#). The Ohio Campground Owners Association has submitted public health protocols to the Lt. Governor's office, so we hope campgrounds/camp guidelines will be available soon.

What if we share a common entry and restroom? What would you suggest on creating shared space plans - rely on property management or make your own plan or combination?

I would talk to your property management about their plans for creating policies and procedures first. If they don't have plans, can you help them? If their plans aren't as strict as you'd like them to be, you need to do what you can to protect your employees, guests and suppliers.

If you are retail and a family group comes into your store, they are obviously not social distancing. Are we required to police them to be 6 feet apart?

"Policing" is going to be tough whether your guests are part of a family pod or not. Instead of thinking about how to correct behaviors, think instead about how to set up physical environments where compliance with the physical distancing comes more naturally.

Examples include spacing seating arrangements 6-feet apart, including benches; putting signs near the seating reminding customers to sit only with their groups; communicating the expectations of physical distancing prior to their arrival (through ticketing confirmation, as an example) and throughout your business through signs

and broadcast means; higher barriers between booth spacings or seat every-other-booth; seating every other ride seat; floor signage spaced 6-feet apart to ensure those at a counter space or in front of an exhibit are adequately spaced, etc.

What about gloves. I hear nothing about using or finding them. Are they necessary?

COVID-19 protocols discussed as of 4/29/2020 do not mandate gloves for the work environments opening in May. If you were required to wear gloves based on other health standards pre-COVID-19 (such as food service), these mandates should continue to be followed.

With all the loss of income already, how are small businesses to afford all of this?

These are tough times for sure, and our hearts go out to all the businesses right now. Many of the changes a business is required or advised to implement, however, cost very little money. Face coverings could be those employees bring from home or made from inexpensive materials (health-grade masks should be preserved for our front-line health care providers.). In fact, we know of at least one major Ohio attraction that is allowing its employees to use their own masks because they will be more apt to wear them consistently. Physical distancing barriers, etc. could be creatively developed with materials already on-hand, and floor signage could be done with tape and signage.

We suggest businesses looking for supplies work with other nearby businesses to buy bulk and to develop new relationships. For example, maybe a local construction company would be willing to 'loan' you hand-washing stations? Reach out to your existing suppliers with a list of your needs and see if they can help.

Also, an Ohio manufacturing coalition has developed a [marketplace](#) for some of the materials you are likely to need.

What is the status of leisure travel? Hotels and lodging are open to "essential travel" but never has leisure been specifically addressed by Governor or the Ohio Department of Health.

We believe the language in the upcoming order on May 1 will be important for understanding. Leisure travel is a term common with our industry but isn't everyday verbiage, so we don't anticipate that much specificity.

What we do know is that mass gatherings of 10 or more are going to be prohibited and that employers are being told to keep employees working at home as much as possible. Based on these requirements, we believe it's pretty clear that unnecessary travel is still discouraged.

How will the State of Ohio communicate with people coming in from other states? They may not be prepared to cover their faces when they arrive.

Ohio may be #InThisTogetherOhio, but it is also #InThisTogetherWorld. All across the globe – including our surrounding states – facial covering policies are in various points of development. New York has made them mandatory. Ohio is not mandating face coverings for customers. If your business is requiring face coverings, you must communicate this with your guests. Customers don't book or buy tickets from ohio.org. TourismOhio sends these leads to individual businesses.

We've already had people in our community complaining about the rules. Will OTA create a best practices for dealing with possible this?

Great idea. We will work on this.

How do we handle customers that are not masked or don't comply with the physical distancing policies?

First, make sure you establish policies for what you will require and for noncompliance. As face coverings are not mandatory for retail customers, each business should establish its policies on whether or not to require (the

Governor is highly recommending this be put into place.) Create some scenarios for your employees on what to do should customer noncompliance be an issue based on your policies.

We need to understand that this is new for everyone. We can learn from other businesses as they reopen. Some retailers are refusing entry, while others are offering face coverings at entry for purchase for \$1. Still others have chosen to rely on voluntary compliance. Remember that there is a [list of exclusions for face coverings in Ohio](#), so not every customer/employee will be able to wear a face covering.

Second, communicate your face covering requirement if established. One attraction we know is going to send requirements for face coverings and physical distancing along with ticket purchase confirmation. Put the requirements on your website. Post signs outside the entrance and throughout your business if needed as reminders. Costco announced 4/29 that its locations will be requiring face covering for its customers. [This is how they are communicating.](#)

Any new procedures for hotels, such as breakfast rules, or not offering free breakfast for the next few months. What about cleaning?

Our friends at the Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association are sharing these recommended [protocols](#) from the American Hotel and Lodging Association. Look at the May 1 order to see if new requirements will be identified for essential businesses. Also, look at the [three sets of guidelines](#) already released. For example, cafeteria buffets are banned and the use of disposable tableware is required in general office requirements. Although not specific to hotels, this might be indicative of what's coming. Until specific guidelines are released, however, we do not know. Again, look at the guidelines for general office environments to provide some specific guidance for that side of your business.

What square footage requirement will there be with regard to number of people allowed in a small space?

Based on the guidelines just released for office environments, manufacturing, construction, retails, etc., the capacity requirement is not based on square footage but on 50% of fire code capacity.

When these new orders are enacted, will those businesses open today as essential be required to have all employees in face coverings? Currently this is not a requirement.

Yes.

So many medical experts keep saying the cotton homemade masks give you 2% protection. Love to see the governor address the effectiveness of each type mask.

The Governor has spoken about how layering the tools together is most effective. Tools we can use include face coverings, cleanings, physical distancing, etc. He has also said repeatedly that face coverings protect others. Pay attention to the fact that he no longer says "masks," and instead says "face coverings." [Here's what the CDC says about homemade masks.](#) *The New York Times* just published a [lengthy article about face coverings](#). Toward the end of the article information is provided about efficacy of different types.

What will businesses be required to provide versus what we expect guests to do/have upon entry?

Based on what we've heard about the orders being submitted the first week of May, this decision is up to individual businesses.

Are there things that Ohio can do together so that expectations are similar from visiting one place to another?

The first set of [guidelines](#) developed by the state set requirements for businesses and are pretty consistent – physical distancing, cleaning, limiting to 50% capacity, mandatory face covering for employees, and good hygiene. Future guidelines on other types of businesses are being developed and will provide further guidance.

Customer policies for face coverings is really one of the key differences customers may encounter place-to-place, and the Governor has already changed that from a requirement to a recommendation.

How can we best support each other now and through re-opening?

Talk to one another! Share what you are doing, and learn from others. Practice kindness. We are all navigating these new waters together.

How do we go about Ohio reopening, but keeping Ohioans safe when our surrounding states aren't opened?

The Governor has stated that states are talking to one another. Other states are at various stages of reopening.

How will attractions with audiences be able to present live performances? Based on the [president's opening guidelines](#), I don't see this happening till way after phase three. Am I understanding this expectation correctly?

Please understand the uncertainty and the fact that the State of Ohio (although considering these federal guidelines) is developing its own reopening strategy. Also understand that theatres are 'mass gatherings' or 'large venues' (using the terms of the federal guidelines). It is likely that reopening will come first to those with strict physical distancing policies in place based on limiting capacity and spacing of seating, as well as other required protocols.